



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
of ADVERTISING AGENCIES

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JUL 29 1997

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Message

TO: Secretary
Federal Communications Commission

FROM: John Kamp 
Senior Vice President

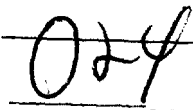
DATE: July 29, 1997

SUBJECT: ExParte Filing
MM Docket 95-176
FCC 97-4

REMARKS:

Attached are five copies of the required memo summarizing the meeting with Cable Bureau Staff in the above docketed proceeding.

If you need additional copies or information, , please contact me at 202/331-7345.


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**Summary of Meeting with FCC re CLOSED CAPTIONING
Wednesday, July 2, 1997**

Attendees from Advertising Industry:

John Kamp, AAAA; Kristine McDevitt, AAAA; Clark Rector, AAF

Attendees from FCC:

Meredith Jones, Cable Bureau Chief; JoAnn Lucanik, Chief of Policy & Rules Division; Bill Johnson, Deputy Chief, Cable Bureau; Alexis Johns, Attorney Advisor; Marcia Glauberman, Senior Statistician, and two other junior staff.

NOTE: John Kamp noted that although no advertising producer was available for the meeting, we would attempt to do so at a later date if appropriate. Meanwhile, he noted that he and officials at AAAA, ANA and AAF had had extensive discussions with field personnel to prepare for this meeting, and that as much as possible the industry staff was representing the views of members of all three associations.

The AAAA and advertising industry position

John Kamp distributed copies of the AAAA Board of Directors policy resolution stating that all advertising agencies should recommend to all clients that all commercials for all products be closed captioned.

John Kamp reiterated the main point of AAAA's Comment, that advertisers and their agencies are moving toward full compliance with the resolution, so there is no need for a government mandate that all ads be closed captioned.

He also emphasized that advertisers and agencies want to caption because they are marketers first, trying to reach as many potential customers as possible. The marketplace, which includes a large number of hearing impaired people, provides the incentive to caption.

FCC Concerns

1) FCC Staff asked if the cost of closed captioning is prohibitive. We answered that it ranged from \$300 a spot to \$700, depending on whether it is a rush or not, and whether it is in a large city or rural location.

2) Staff had pulled some information from the Internet which listed those 1997 Superbowl ads closed captioned, and those not. The list of non-closed captioned ads was extensive, and they questioned why.

We agreed that the non-closed captioned list required serious review and that, if correct, it suggested a lapse that needed to be corrected. However, we reminded Staff that the Superbowl is a special event, and that FCC staff should not generalize from it. Superbowl ads often are finished just before they air, and closed captioning can be very difficult to complete at the last minute.

3) Staff questioned whether captioning a national ad one time meant that all copies also would be captioned. We noted that, although there may be exceptions, most ads need only be captioned once. Staff then stated that a national satellite feed of an ad should not be difficult, once that initial, inexpensive captioning was completed.

We explained that, while captioning national ads should not be difficult, local ads are another case. Cost is a much more relevant factor for local ads, as is lack of access to captioning facilities. Co-op ads present problems, as well. We gave as an example national car ads with local information added to the end. Especially when these are done to respond to competitor challenges, time constraints, and other practical difficulties can preclude efficient captioning. Staff asked how much time of a co-op ad is local. We said that usually these are not longer than five seconds.

4) Staff summed up what they saw as the two reasons ads are not captioned: a) Advertisers don't want to spend the additional money, even if it is minimal; b) Captioning is not included as part of planned production time, so technical and time constraints arise.

Our Final Points

We reiterated that, if the Superbowl list is accurate, further study and action on the part of industry is appropriate, but the Superbowl is a special situation and not necessarily indicative of the usual captioning experience.

John Kamp stated that if the FCC does decide to mandate captioning of ads, a 5-10 year phase in period would be necessary. He cautioned the FCC staff that a mandate for local captioning would present serious financial difficulties, including decisions by advertisers to use other media.

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